

11/02/98

PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL LETTER
(Large Entity)

Docket No.
980292

TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111 and 37 C.F.R. 1.53 is the patent application of:

Hermann PECNIK and Susanne PAIER

For: **Automotive Transmission**

Enclosed are:

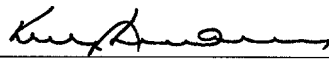
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Dated: **2 November 1998**


Signature

Karl Hormann
Registration No.: 26,470

cc:

JCS11 U.S. PTO
09/184553
11/02/98

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION.**1. Field of the Invention.**

10 The invention, in general, relates to a transversely mounted drive unit for driving at least two axles of an all wheel drive vehicle, and, more particularly, to a drive unit comprising a housing, an input gear adapted to mesh with an output pinion of a gear shift transmission, a center differential arranged coaxially relative to the input gear and one axle, at least one output member for driving one axle
15 and an output gear drivingly connected in coaxial relationship with a second output member of the center differential for driving the other axle.

2. Background of the Invention.

20 There are two known problems which present themselves in connection with drive units having a transversely mounted engine - transmission block and a first driven axle arranged parallel thereto. One problem is encountered in providing sufficient mounting space outside of the motor structure for accommodating the additional drive elements required to drive the second driven
25 axle, and the other problem is, if at all possible to accommodate those elements without altering the structural elements required for driving only one axle. The former problem often imposes compromises in respect of the size of the output gear and of the mounting support.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION.

It is, therefore, an object of the invention to provide a structure which solves these problems without compromises in respect of its dimensions.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION.

In the accomplishment of this and other objects, the invention provides for:

- 10 a) rigidly connecting the input gear to the cage of the center differential;
- b) journalling one end of the cage of the center differential in a tapered roller bearing in the housing;
- c) extending a second output member of the center differential from the opposite end of the cage and rigidly connecting it to an output gear; and
- 15 d) journalling the output gear in a second tapered roller bearing in the housing and journalling the cage of the center differential in a third tapered roller bearing in the output gear.

By connecting the center differential and the input gear, the former may
20 be moved towards the transmission against the first tapered roller bearing seated in the wall of the housing and thus create more space near the engine without enlarging the existing housing. The output member may extend into the space, and the output gear be arranged there. In this connection, it is important, for purposes of the dimensions of the gearing, to provide sufficient space in the axial
25 direction. Sufficient space results from journalling the cage in the output gear. Thus, even at a very small space of the first driven axle from the engine housing, sufficient space remains in the transverse direction towards the clutch housing, so that the diameter of the output gear may remain large. Thus, the distance between the bearings supporting the cage is also short, and the unit is

correspondingly rigid which is advantageous as regards both service life and operating noise level. In addition, significant axial forces can be absorbed so that the output gear may be formed with a large helix angle or even as a bevel gear.

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If the tapered roller bearings are disposed such that their effective cones have the same point, the bearing forces acting on the second tapered roller bearing will exert no tilting moment on the output gear. This results in significantly improved running accuracy or trueness of the center differential and

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In an advantageous embodiment of the invention and depending upon structural conditions, the output gear may be additionally supported in the housing by an auxiliary bearing. Since the forces are low and free of any axial component, a light roller or needle bearing is sufficient for this purpose.

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In a preferred embodiment, the center differential is a unique structure. It is provided with first and second planetary gear trains, the first planetary gear train being provided with a planet carrier and planet gears rigidly connected to the cage, a sun gear connected to one half-shaft of the first driven axle and with an internal gear. The second planetary gear train is provided with an internal gear rigidly connected to the internal gear of the first planetary gear train, a sun gear connected to the other half-shaft of the first driven axle as well as with a planet carrier which constitutes the further output member and which is provided

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two planetary gears meshing with each other. Such structure allows incorporating the function of an axle differential for the first driven axle into the center differential while at the same time significantly reducing the axial dimension of the center differential. The axial space required by a center differential structured in this manner is smaller than the bevel gear axle

differentials used in a conventional vehicles with only one driven axle.

Two structures have been found to be of advantage for the further output member driving the second axle: In one structure, an intermediate shaft journaled in the housing is provided with a spur gear and with a bevel gear with the bevel gear meshing with a further bevel gear. In an alternative structure the output gear is structured as a bevel gear. The latter structure is only possible because the unique arrangement of the tapered roller bearings is capable of absorbing large axial forces.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL DRAWINGS.

The novel features which are considered to be characteristic of the invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, in respect of its structure, construction and lay-out, as well as manufacturing techniques, together with other objects and advantages thereof, will best be understood from the following description of preferred embodiment when read with reference to the appended drawings, in which:

20 Fig. 1 is an approximately horizontal sectional view of a first embodiment of the invention;

Fig. 2 is an enlarged view of the essential portion of Fig. 1; and

25 Fig. 3 is an approximately horizontal sectional view of a second embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In Fig. 1, reference numeral 1 designates an engine, and 1a denotes the contour of the engine which critical to the spatial conditions. A gear shift transmission is schematically shown at 2, and the connected housing of the drive unit is shown at 3. A output pinion 4 of the transmission 2 drives an input gear 5 of the drive unit. The input gear 5 is rigidly connected to a center differential 6. The center differential will be seen to have a center axis 7 which also constitutes the center axis of the input gear 5 as well as of the left and right half-shafts 8 and 9 of a first driven axle. An output gear 10 for driving the second driven axle is driven by the center differential 6. The output gear 10 meshes with a spur gear 11 which is connected to an intermediate shaft 12, and a bevel gear 13 also connected to the shaft 12 in turn drives a further bevel gear 14 mounted on a shaft 15 for driving a second axle (not shown).

The center differential 6 is shown on an enlarged scale in Fig. 2. The differential 6 is encased by a cage 20. The cage 20 may be and is rigidly connected to the input gear 5. At both of its ends, the cage 20 forms bearing sleeves 21, 22, the arrangement being such that the input gear 5 is closer to the right bearing sleeve 22 than it is to the left sleeve 21. First and second planetary gear trains 23 and 24 are accommodated within the cage 20. The first planetary gear train 23 consists of a planet carrier constituted by the cage 20, planet gears 25, a sun gear 26 drivingly connected to the left half-shaft 8 of the first driven axle and an internal gear 27 which is freely rotatable within the cage 20. The second planetary gear train 24 consists of a planet carrier 28, first and second planet gears 29 and 30, with a first planet gear always meshing with a second planet gear, and of a sun gear 31 connected to the right half-shaft 9 of the first driven axle. The first planet gears 29 mesh with the internal gear 27. The internal gear 27 is shared by the first and second planetary gear trains 23 and 24. The second planet gears 30 mesh with the sun gear 31.

The planet carrier 28 of the second planetary gear train 24 is provided with an axial hollow shaft 32 protruding out of the second bearing sleeve 22 of the cage 20. The hollow shaft 32 splined at 33 to the spur gear 10

5 At one end, the cage 20 of the center differential 6 is journalled in a tapered roller bearing 35 seated in the housing 3. At its opposite end, the cage 20, by way of the second bearing sleeve 22, is journalled in a third tapered roller bearing 37 seated in an axial recess in the output gear 10. The output gear 10 is in turn journalled in a second tapered roller bearing 36 seated in the housing 3
10 and, if desired, in an additional small support bearing 39. In Fig. 1, the small support bearing 39 has been shown as a needle bearing. Alternatively, it could be supported in the cage 20. The second and third tapered roller bearings 36 and 37 are disposed such that their pressure cones have the same point 38 on the axis 7.

15 The embodiment of Fig. 3 is distinct from that of Fig. 1 in that the output gear 40 is a bevel gear meshing with a further bevel gear 41 mounted on the shaft 15 for driving the second axle (not shown). Such a structure is possible because the bearing support of the bevel gear 40 is capable of absorbing large
20 axial forces.

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Having described our invention, what we claim is:

1. A transverse-mounted drive unit for driving first and second axles of a vehicle, comprising:
 - 5 a housing comprising first and second axially spaced bearings;
a center differential comprising a cage coaxially mounted on the first axle and provided with at least one output member for driving the first axle and a second output member for driving the second axle;
an input gear coaxially coupled to the cage and adapted to be driven by
10 an output gear of a transmission;
first and second bearing sleeves axially extending in opposite directions from the cage, the first bearing sleeve being journaled in the first bearing;
an axial extension connected to the second output member; and
an output gear coupled to the axial extension adapted to mesh with a
15 drive gear connected with the second axle and respectively provided in opposite surfaces with a bearing member seated in the second bearing and a third bearing for receiving the second bearing sleeve.
2. The drive unit of claim 1, wherein the first, second and third bearings are
20 tapered roller bearings.
3. The drive Unit of claim 2, wherein the effective cones of the second and third tapered roller bearings form the same point.
- 25 4. The drive unit of claim 1, wherein the output gear is supported by an additional bearing seated in one of the housing and cage.
5. The drive unit of claim 1, wherein the first axle comprises first and second axially aligned half-shafts.

6. The drive unit of claim 5, wherein the center differential comprises first and second planetary gear trains, the first planetary gear train comprising a planet carrier rigidly connected to the cage and provided with planet gears, a sun gear connected to the first half-shaft and an internal gear freely rotatable in the cage, the second planetary gear train comprising an internal gear rigidly connected to the internal gear of the first planetary gear train, a sun gear connected to the second half-shaft and a planet carrier constituting the second output member and comprising at least one pair of meshing planet gears.
7. The drive unit of claim 1, further comprising an intermediate shaft rotatably journaled in the housing and connected with a spur gear meshing with the output gear and a bevel gear adapted for meshing with a bevel gear connected to a shaft for driving the second axle.
8. The drive unit of claim 1, wherein the output gear is a bevel gear adapted to mesh with a bevel gear connected to a shaft for driving the second axle.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A drive unit for driving at least two axles of an all-wheel drive vehicle, having a housing (3), an input gear (5) meshing with an output gear (4) of a gear-shift transmission (2), a center differential (6) coaxially disposed relative to the input gear (5) and one of the axles. To yield maximum rigidity at minimum structural dimensions the input gear (5) is rigidly mounted to a cage (20) of the
10 center differential (6), the cage (20) being journalled at one end in a first tapered roller bearing (35) seated in the housing (3). A further output member (28) of the center differential (6) extends from the opposite end of the cage (20) and is rigidly connected to an output gear (10; 40) journalled in a second tapered roller bearing (36) seated in the housing (3) and provided with a third tapered roller
15 bearing (37) wherein the other end of the cage (20) is journalled.

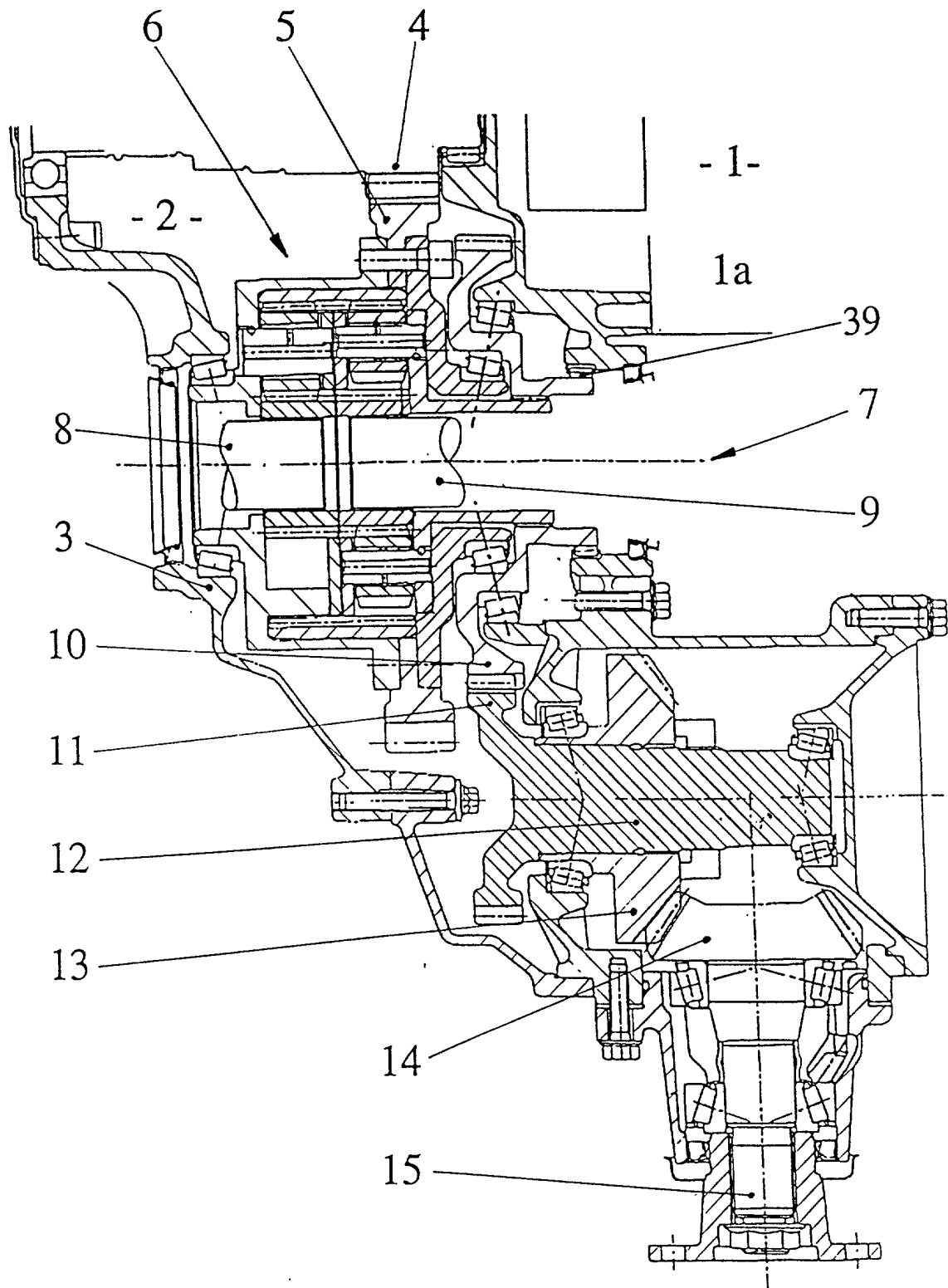


FIG 1

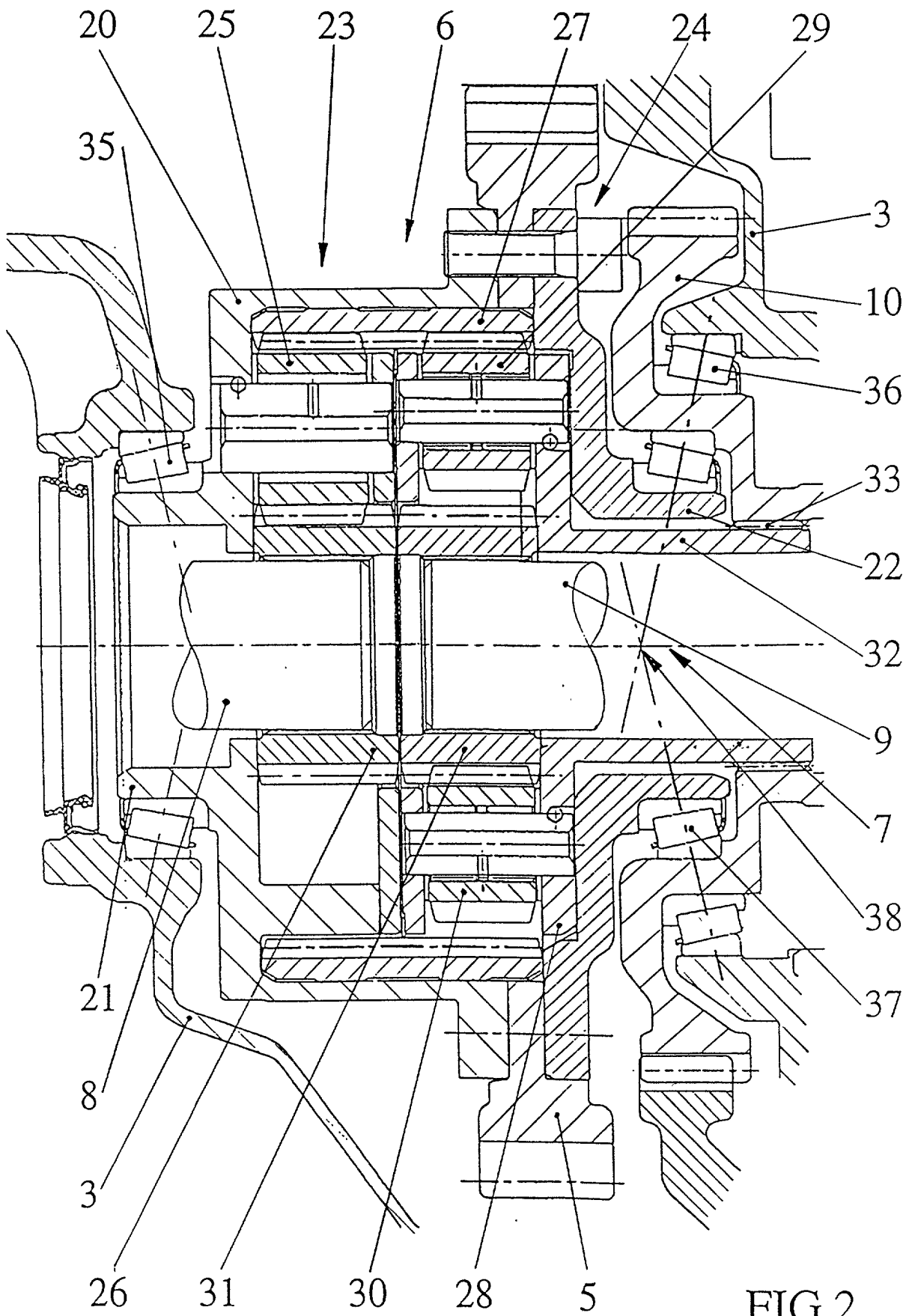


FIG 2

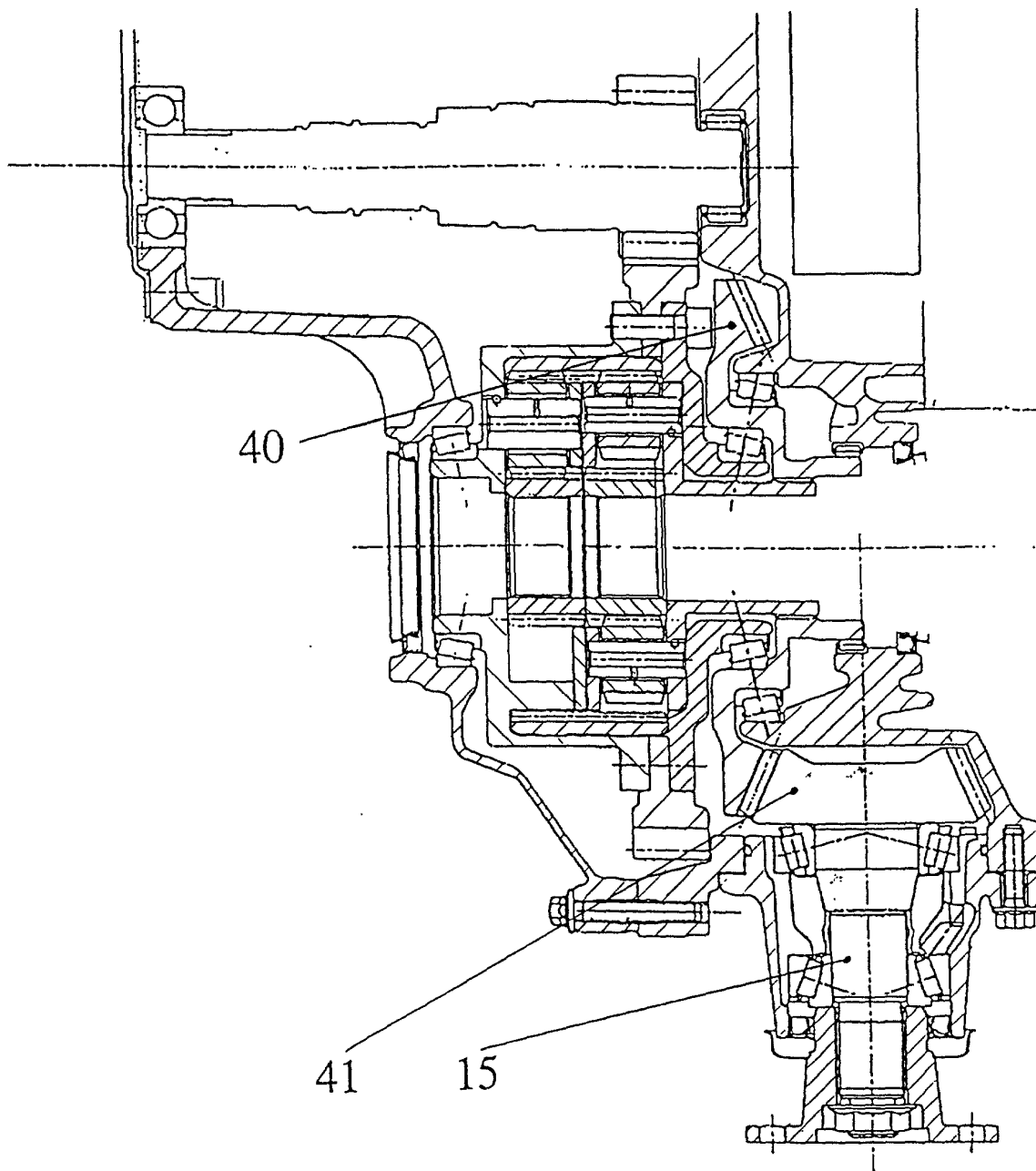


FIG 3

Docket No.
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Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

Automotive Transmission

the specification of which

(check one)

☒ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application No. or PCT International Application Number _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Not Claimed

197 48 525.1	Germany	3 November 1997	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

N/A	
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)
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I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U. S. C. Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, C. F. R., Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

N/A		
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pending, abandoned)
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pending, abandoned)
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status) (patented, pending, abandoned)

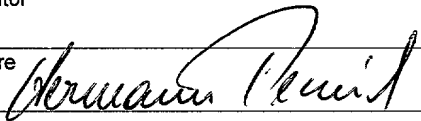
I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

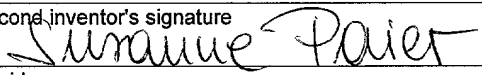
POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. *(list name and registration number)*

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